



Substitute House Bill No. 7020

Public Act No. 15-134

AN ACT CONCERNING EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS AND INITIATIVES.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

Section 1. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2015*) (a) As used in this section, "bachelor's degree program in early childhood education or child development" means a bachelor's degree with a concentration in early childhood education, including, but not limited to, a bachelor's degree in early childhood education, child study, child development or human growth and development.

(b) On and after July 1, 2015, the Office of Early Childhood shall, during a review and assessment pursuant to subdivision (4) of subsection (b) of section 10-16p of the general statutes, as amended by this act, collect data relating to bachelor's degree programs in early childhood education or childhood development that have not been approved by the Board of Regents for Higher Education or the Office of Higher Education and the Office of Early Childhood from institutions of higher education that are regionally accredited. The office shall, at least quarterly, use such data to conduct a trend analysis of such bachelor's degree programs for the purpose of determining (1) whether such bachelor's degree programs align with the teacher preparation standards of the National Association for the Education of

Substitute House Bill No. 7020

Young Children, and (2) which courses and concentrations offered as part of such bachelor's degree programs align with such teacher preparation standards.

(c) During a review and assessment pursuant to subdivision (4) of subsection (b) of section 10-16p of the general statutes, as amended by this act, the office shall (1) review the results of the trend analysis conducted pursuant to subsection (b) of this section for the purpose of determining whether the degree of an individual with a bachelor's degree in early childhood education or child development or a bachelor's degree and twelve credits or more in early childhood education or child development, other than those bachelor's degrees specified in subparagraphs (B) and (C) of subdivision (2) of subsection (b) of section 10-16p of the general statutes, as amended by this act, has a sufficient concentration in early childhood education so as to satisfy the requirements set forth in said subparagraphs (B) and (C), and (2) consider an individual to have met the requirements set forth in said subparagraphs (B) and (C) if the degree of such individual is from a bachelor's degree program in early childhood education or child development that is aligned with the teacher preparation standards of the National Association for the Education of Young Children as determined by such trend analysis.

(d) The office shall make the results of the trend analysis conducted pursuant to subsection (b) of this section available on its Internet web site.

Sec. 2. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2015*) For the school year commencing July 1, 2017, and each school year thereafter, (1) the local or regional board of education or regional educational service center operating an interdistrict magnet school offering a preschool program, or (2) the governing council of a state or local charter school offering a preschool program shall obtain accreditation for such preschool program from the National Association for the Education of Young Children.

Substitute House Bill No. 7020

Sec. 3. Section 10-502 of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2015*):

The Office of Early Childhood shall collaborate with and may, within available appropriations, provide funding to local and regional early childhood councils [in] for the implementation of early care and education and child development programs at the local level. Such early childhood councils shall: (1) Develop and implement a comprehensive plan for an early childhood system for the community served by such early childhood council, (2) develop policy and program planning, (3) encourage community participation by emphasizing substantial parental involvement, (4) collect, analyze and evaluate data with a focus on program and service outcomes, (5) allocate resources, and (6) perform any other functions that will assist in the provision of early childhood programs and services. Such early childhood councils may enter into memoranda of agreement with the local or regional school readiness council, described in section 10-16r, of the town or region served by such early childhood council to perform the duties and functions of a school readiness council, in accordance with the provisions of section 10-16r, or if no such local or regional school readiness council exists for the town or region of such early childhood council, perform the duties and functions of a school readiness council, in accordance with the provisions of section 10-16r.

Sec. 4. (*Effective from passage*) The Office of Early Childhood shall develop a plan to assist early childhood education program providers that accept state funds for infant, toddler and preschool spaces associated with such program's child care program or school readiness program in the implementation of the staff qualifications requirements under subsection (b) of section 10-16p of the general statutes, as amended by this act. The plan shall include, but need not be limited to, a means of (1) assisting staff members of such program in obtaining a bachelor's degree with a concentration in early childhood education,

Substitute House Bill No. 7020

(2) increasing the salaries of or providing incentives to staff members of such program who hold a bachelor's degree or otherwise meet such staff qualifications requirements, and (3) retaining staff members of such program who hold a bachelor's degree or otherwise meet such staff qualifications requirements. Not later than January 1, 2016, the office shall submit the plan and any recommendations to the joint standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to education, in accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a of the general statutes.

Sec. 5. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2015*) Not later than July first, annually, the Office of Early Childhood shall submit a report regarding the status of school readiness program providers' compliance with the staff qualifications requirement, described in subsection (b) of section 10-16p of the general statutes, as amended by this act, to the joint standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to education, in accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a of the general statutes.

Sec. 6. Section 10-515 of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2015*):

On or before March 1, 2015, the Commissioner of Early Childhood, in consultation with the Department of Education, shall develop a preschool experience survey that [may] shall be included in kindergarten registration materials provided by local and regional boards of education to parents or guardians of children enrolling in kindergarten pursuant to section 10-184. The board shall use such survey to collect information regarding (1) whether the child enrolling in kindergarten has participated in a preschool program, and (2) (A) if such child has participated in a preschool program, the nature, length and setting of such preschool program, or (B) if the child has not participated in a preschool program, the reasons why such child did not participate in a preschool program, including, but not limited to,

Substitute House Bill No. 7020

financial difficulty, lack of transportation, parental choice regarding enrollment, limitations related to the hours of operation of available preschool programs and any other barriers to participation in a preschool program. A local or regional board of education shall not require any parent or guardian of such child to complete such survey as a condition of such child's enrollment in kindergarten.

Sec. 7. Subsection (a) of section 10-501 of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2015*):

(a) The Office of Early Childhood shall develop and implement an early childhood information system. Such early childhood information system shall facilitate and encourage the sharing of data between and among early childhood service providers by tracking (1) the health, safety and school readiness of all young children receiving early care and education services from (A) any local or regional board of education, including children enrolled in a preschool program under the Connecticut Smart Start competitive grant program, pursuant to section 10-506, (B) school readiness program, as defined in section 10-16p, as amended by this act, or (C) any program receiving public funding, in a manner similar to the system described in section 10-10a, (2) the characteristics of the existing and potential workforce serving such children, (3) the characteristics of such programs serving such children, and (4) data collected [, if any,] from the preschool experience survey, described in section 10-515, as amended by this act.

Sec. 8. Subsection (b) of section 10-16p of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective from passage*):

(b) (1) The office shall be the lead agency for school readiness. For purposes of this section and section 10-16u, school readiness program providers eligible for funding from the office shall include local and

Substitute House Bill No. 7020

regional boards of education, regional educational service centers, family resource centers and providers of child day care centers, as defined in section 19a-77, Head Start programs, preschool programs and other programs that meet such standards established by the commissioner. The office shall establish standards for school readiness programs. The standards may include, but need not be limited to, guidelines for staff-child interactions, curriculum content, including preliteracy development, lesson plans, parent involvement, staff qualifications and training, transition to school and administration. The office shall develop age-appropriate developmental skills and goals for children attending such programs. The commissioner, in consultation with the president of the Board of Regents for Higher Education, the Commissioners of Education and Social Services and other appropriate entities, shall develop a professional development program for the staff of school readiness programs.

(2) For purposes of this section:

(A) Prior to July 1, [2015] 2017, "staff qualifications" means there is in each classroom an individual who has at least the following: (i) A childhood development associate credential or an equivalent credential issued by an organization approved by the commissioner and twelve credits or more in early childhood education or child development, as determined by the commissioner or the president of the Board of Regents for Higher Education, after consultation with the commissioner, from an institution of higher education (I) accredited by the Board of Regents for Higher Education or Office of Higher Education, and (II) regionally accredited; (ii) an associate's degree with twelve credits or more in early childhood education or child development, as determined by the commissioner or the president of the Board of Regents for Higher Education, after consultation with the commissioner, from such an institution; (iii) a four-year degree with twelve credits or more in early childhood education or child

Substitute House Bill No. 7020

development, as determined by the commissioner or the president of the Board of Regents for Higher Education, after consultation with the commissioner, from such an institution; or (iv) certification pursuant to section 10-145b with an endorsement in early childhood education or special education;

(B) From July 1, [2015] 2017, until June 30, 2020, "staff qualifications" means that for each early childhood education program accepting state funds for infant, toddler and preschool spaces associated with such program's child day care program or school readiness program, (i) at least fifty per cent of those individuals with the primary responsibility for a classroom of children hold (I) certification pursuant to section 10-145b with an endorsement in early childhood education or early childhood special education, or (II) a bachelor's degree with a concentration in early childhood education, including, but not limited to, a bachelor's degree in early childhood education, child study, child development or human growth and development, from an institution of higher education accredited by the Board of Regents for Higher Education or Office of Higher Education, and regionally accredited, provided such bachelor's degree program is approved by the Board of Regents for Higher Education or the Office of Higher Education and the Office of Early Childhood, and (ii) such remaining individuals with the primary responsibility for a classroom of children hold an associate degree with a concentration in early childhood education, including, but not limited to, an associate's degree in early childhood education, child study, child development or human growth and development, from an institution of higher education (I) accredited by the Board of Regents for Higher Education or Office of Higher Education, and (II) regionally accredited, provided such associate degree program is approved by the Board of Regents for Higher Education or the Office of Higher Education and the Office of Early Childhood; and

(C) On and after July 1, 2020, "staff qualifications" means that for

Substitute House Bill No. 7020

each early childhood education program accepting state funds for infant, toddler and preschool spaces associated with such program's child day care program or school readiness program, one hundred per cent of those individuals with the primary responsibility for a classroom of children hold (i) certification pursuant to section 10-145b with an endorsement in early childhood education or early childhood special education, or (ii) a bachelor's degree with a concentration in early childhood education, including, but not limited to, a bachelor's degree in early childhood education, child study, child development or human growth and development, from an institution of higher education (I) accredited by the Board of Regents for Higher Education or the Office of Higher Education, and (II) regionally accredited, provided such bachelor's degree program is approved by the Board of Regents for Higher Education or the Office of Higher Education and the Office of Early Childhood.

(3) Any individual with a bachelor's degree in early childhood education or child development or a bachelor's degree and twelve credits or more in early childhood education or child development, who, on or before June 30, 2015, is employed by an early childhood education program that accepts state funds for infant, toddler and preschool spaces associated with such program's child day care program or school readiness program shall be considered to meet the staff qualifications required under subparagraphs (B) and (C) of subdivision (2) of this subsection. No such early childhood education program shall terminate any such individual from employment for purposes of meeting the staff qualification requirements set forth in subparagraph (B) or (C) of subdivision (2) of this subsection.

(4) Any individual with a bachelor's degree in early childhood education or child development or a bachelor's degree and twelve credits or more in early childhood education or child development, other than those bachelor's degrees specified in subparagraphs (B) and

Substitute House Bill No. 7020

(C) of subdivision (2) of this subsection, may submit documentation concerning such degree for review and assessment by the office as to whether such degree has a sufficient concentration in early childhood education so as to satisfy the requirements set forth in said subparagraphs (B) and (C).

(5) Any individual with an associate's degree with twelve credits or more in early childhood education or child development, as determined by the commissioner or the president of the Board of Regents for Higher Education, after consultation with the commissioner, from an institution of higher education (A) accredited by the Board of Regents for Higher Education or Office of Higher Education, and (B) regionally accredited, who has been employed in the same early childhood education program that accepts state funds for infant, toddler and preschool spaces associated with such program's child day care program or school readiness program since 1995 shall be considered to meet the staff qualifications required under subparagraphs (B) and (C) of subdivision (2) of this subsection until June 30, 2025. On and after July 1, 2025, such individual shall hold a childhood development associate credential or an equivalent credential, described in subparagraph (A) of subdivision (2) of this subsection, or otherwise meet the staff qualifications required under subparagraph (C) of subdivision (2) of this subsection. Any such individual who terminates his or her employment with such early childhood education program on or before June 30, 2025, and accepts a position at another early childhood education program accepting state funds for spaces associated with such program's child day care program or school readiness program shall submit documentation of such individual's progress toward meeting the staff qualification requirements set forth in subparagraph (B) or (C) of subdivision (2) of this subsection in a manner determined by the office.

Approved June 24, 2015